

21ST SPACEWING

Peterson Air Force Base

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Commander and the
Commander in Chief of US
Space Command have the
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The 21st Comptroller
Squadron!



Lt Col Jack Conroy—The Boss

On the eastern edge of Colorado Springs, Colorado, with the majestic Pikes Peak to the west and vast, open plains to the east, lies Peterson Air Force Base. The host wing for Peterson is the 21st Space Wing, the largest geographical wing in the Air Force. The 21st SW's assets expand to nine countries, crossing 14 time zones, with 33 squadrons in 24 locations. It is the strategic guardian to North America and her international interests. Our operational mission is to provide missile warning and space control for the world.

The first missile launch alert system to warn our forces is a space-based system called the Defense Support Program (DSP). DSP satellites and associated ground operations work together to form this critical early warning system. Reports from the field are sent to the North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Space Command command centers located at Cheyenne Mountain AFS for analysis and action. The DSP satellites are flown by 50th Space Wing personnel at Schriever AFB. The 821st Space Group at Buckley ANGB oversees the program and the 21st SW's space communications sites.

Another missile warning site associated with the 21st SW is a Colorado National Guard asset, the 137th Space Warning Squadron, which provides mobile DSP support. The wing's ground-based radars include a Sea-Launched Ballistic Missile warning system called PAVE PAWS, a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, and a Perimeter Attack Radar Characterization System. Geographically separated units supporting these systems include the 6th and 7th SWSs located respectively at Cape Cod AFS MA and Beale AFB CA; the 12th and 13th SWSs located at Thule AB GL and Clear AFS AK; and the 10th SWS at Cavalier AFS ND. A 21st SW detachment is also located at RAF Fylingdales UK, to coordinate missile warning and space surveillance with the Royal Air Force.

Like missile warning, space control plays a crucial role in our national defense framework. A major part of space control is space surveillance, which includes cataloguing and tracking all man-made objects in the earth's orbit. This function helps prevent collision between these objects and new satellites or the space shuttle. Spanning the globe are multiple 21st SW active and passive surveillance units. These units extend from the 20th Space Surveillance Squadron at Eglin AFB FL, which provides active radar surveillance, to the 3rd SPSS in Misawa AB JA,

which operates Deep Space Tracking System antennas. Our control of space through all of these systems will continue to give US forces an advantage into the 21st century.

But who supports this complex web of units and operations that protect our freedom? Who ensures dollars are available to procure equipment needed to track an ICBM coming over the pole, thereby deterring potential aggressors? Who ensures the 21st SW Commander and the Commander in Chief, US Space Command, have the freedom to make critical strategic decisions versus worrying about their pay checks being correct? The 21st Comptroller Squadron!



DSP Satellite

While the 21st CPTS is a typical base-level financial management organization, we have many challenges and individuals that set us apart from the crowd. As noted above, we ultimately support a multitude of organizations across the region and around the world. The Financial Analysis Flight, led by Pam Phillian, serves all of the 21st SWs units' monetary requests.

As is common around the Air Force, most of our missions' price tags surpass the allocated funds. Many critical operations are becoming so heavily contracted (and therefore subject to private economic upswings and price increases) that there are often few dollars left for quality of life and ancillary projects. However, the magical Merlins of FMA do their tricks to ensure our nationally-critical missions continue around the clock. An example of the unique job performed by FMA can be seen in the work of Sheila Cavanaugh. As a member of the Operations Branch, Cavanaugh handles funding for up to seven sites at a time. She says, We're constantly busy. There's always something happening somewhere in the world. We use a popular saying borrowed from the British Empire of the 19th Century: The sun never sets on the 21st SW. For Cavanaugh, that holds true. She says a major challenge is doing business with all of her

sites during a duty day. That's understandable since time zones vary greatly from RAF Fylingdales to Clear AFS AK.

For the Operations Branch, another challenge is dealing with a "revolving door effect" in regard to personnel turnover at the sites. Because most assignments at 21st SW geographically separated units are remote tours, personalities and expertise levels are ever changing. Committed to the mission, FMA has historically conquered all of these challenges while sustaining a sizeable local base population. The 45-person Financial Services Flight accounts for most of the 21st CPTSs remaining personnel. While not directly supporting the network of worldwide sites that encompass the entire 21st SW, FMF has its own opportunities to excel.

Peterson AFB plays host not only to the 21st SW, but a plethora of organizations, including Headquarters USSPACECOM, NORAD, HQ Air Force Space Command, and the 302nd Air Reserve Wing. Finance's reach even expands to regional organizations as well. We provide limited support for Cheyenne Mountain AS, Schriever AFB, Buckley ANGB, and Denver area organizations. This broad range of support can be put into perspective with this fact—the 21st CPTS Accounting Liaison Office was responsible for the balanced closure of 88 separate Operating Agency Codes/Operating Budget Account Numbers (OAC/OBANs) at Fiscal Year 1999 closeout.

The 21st CPTS is also a front-runner on the travel reengineering front, helping to pave the way for eventual implementation of the Defense Travel System. PerDiemAzing (PDA), a paperless travel software package, has been running full-speed at Peterson for a couple of years. Though only currently testing this software on about 25 percent of Peterson's non-Reserve vouchers, we process an average 2,000 PDA vouchers per quarter, gaining valuable insight into the intricacies and benefits of paperless travel.

Led by Lt Col Jack Conroy, the 21st CPTS is facing and conquering many challenges as we head into the 21st century and the deployment of an Aerospace Force. Due to the dedication of people like Bruce Ellis, the Air Force's 1999 Quality Assurance Manager of the Year, and all of our hard-working squadron members, the future of strategic global security has a bedrock of financial support in the 21st Space Wing.